

FOND DU LAC

Having Someone to Talk To: The Value of Partnerships and Community Education in Screening and Early Detection of Cancer

Growth of partnerships is important to the Fond du Lac Wiidookaage Comprehensive Cancer Program. Along with local tribal efforts, state and national partnerships, and core funding through the CDC, we now have American Indian women who have been diagnosed and treated for early stage breast cancer who are willing to tell their personal stories in a public venue—bald heads are beautiful!

The Fond du Lac Wiidookaage Comprehensive Cancer Program successfully implemented a partnership between the tribe and the state via the SAGE Minnesota Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening program. The concern with screening and early detection is clear when it is understood that the deaths due to breast cancer are over 40% for Fond du Lac women—much higher than the 11.5% expected for white women (Minnesota Cancer Facts and Figures, 2006).

Organizations working together can successfully reach an underserved population of American Indians—leaving fewer of our daughters longing for someone to talk to about their cancer risk and prevention opportunities.

Early detection through breast cancer screening by mammography is the best protection by finding breast cancer early when it most treatable. Our partnership with SAGE—launched February 1, 2007—has

allowed for increased access to mammograms for American Indian women. SAGE data for 2008–2009 show that 163 mammograms and 146 Paps were received by Fond du Lac women. Through this effort, one woman was diagnosed with breast cancer and two women were treated for precancerous cervical lesions.

Partners that have facilitated access to mammograms:

- The Fond du Lac Public Health Nursing Department's Cancer Outreach Worker provides one-to-one breast cancer education through the American Cancer Society's *Circle of Life Plus Program* and Friend-to-Friend Parties.
- Dr. Joy Dorscher, the University of Minnesota, Duluth Medical School Minority Health program, and Dr. Lana White-King, both American Indian physicians, have facilitated Friend-to-Friend Parties.
- Dr. Lana White-King is also part of the Shakopee-Mdewakanton Mobile Mammography program which screened 106 Fond du Lac women in 2009 in addition to those screened by SAGE.
- National partners such as Native American Cancer Research and the Susan G. Komen Foundation have focused attention on screening.

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